

APPENDIX K



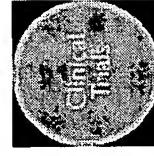
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Specific Cancers : Thyroid Cancer : Treating thyroid cancer

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The stages of thyroid cancer

CancerHelp



This page tells you about the stages of thyroid cancer. You can scroll down the page to read all the information here. Or use the following links to go straight to sections on

- Why is staging important?
- The TNM staging system
- Number stages of papillary, follicular and medullary thyroid cancer
- Staging and anaplastic thyroid cancer

Why is staging important?

The stage of a cancer tells the doctor how far it has spread. It is important because treatment is often decided according to the stage of a cancer. Your scans will give some information about the stage of your cancer.

There are different ways of staging cancers. The two main ways are the TNM system and number systems. There is more about staging cancers in the About Cancer section of CancerHelp UK.

The TNM stages of thyroid cancer

'TNM' stands for Tumour, Node, Metastasis. The system can describe the size of a primary tumour, whether there are lymph nodes with cancer cells in them and whether the cancer has spread to a different part of the body.

There are 4 main T stages for thyroid cancer

- T1 – the tumour is entirely inside the thyroid and is less than 1cm across in any direction
- T2 – The tumour is entirely inside the thyroid and is more than 1cm but no more than 4cm across in any direction
- T3 – The tumour is entirely inside the thyroid and is more than 4cm across in any direction
- T4 – The cancer has grown outside the covering of the thyroid gland.

There are 2 possible stages of lymph node involvement. Either there are no lymph nodes containing cancer cells (N0) or there are lymph nodes containing cancer cells (N1).

N1 is divided into 2 groups

- N1a – there are lymph nodes containing cancer cells on one side of the neck only (on the same side as the cancer)
- N1b – there are lymph nodes containing cancer cells anywhere else (usually the other side of the neck or in the chest)

There are 2 possible stages of cancer spread. Either the cancer has not spread (M0) or it has spread (M1).

The number stages of thyroid cancer

This depends on the type of thyroid cancer you have. There are 4 stages for papillary, follicular and medullary thyroid cancer, with stage

one being the earliest stage.

Papillary and follicular thyroid cancer

The number stages for papillary and follicular thyroid cancer are the same. There are 4 number stages. They are different, depending on how old you are. This is because these types of thyroid cancer tend to respond well to treatment, particularly if you are younger.

- Stage 1 – Your cancer is only inside the thyroid
- Stage 2 – If you are under 45, the cancer has spread anywhere outside the thyroid; if you are over 45, the cancer is larger than 1cm across
- Stage 3 – You are over 45 and your cancer has spread to the lymph nodes or soft tissues in your neck
- Stage 4 – You are over 45 and your cancer has spread to another part of your body, such as your lungs or bones

Medullary thyroid cancer

There are 4 number stages for medullary thyroid cancer. These are

- Stage 1 – Your cancer is less than 1cm across
- Stage 2 – Your cancer is between 1cm and 4cm across
- Stage 3 – There is spread to your lymph node
- Stage 4 – There is spread to another part of your body

Anaplastic thyroid cancer

There is no number staging system used for anaplastic thyroid cancer. This is because there is a high risk of the cancer spreading. So your doctor will decide on the treatment that is best for you, depending on

- Whether the cancer is only in your neck and so may be able to be

- completely removed
- Your level of fitness for treatments such as surgery or radiotherapy